

## Colorado's minorities losing ground

Written by [Burt Hubbard](#) and [Ann Carnahan Espinola](#) on Jan 20th, 2013. | Copyright © EdNewsColorado.org

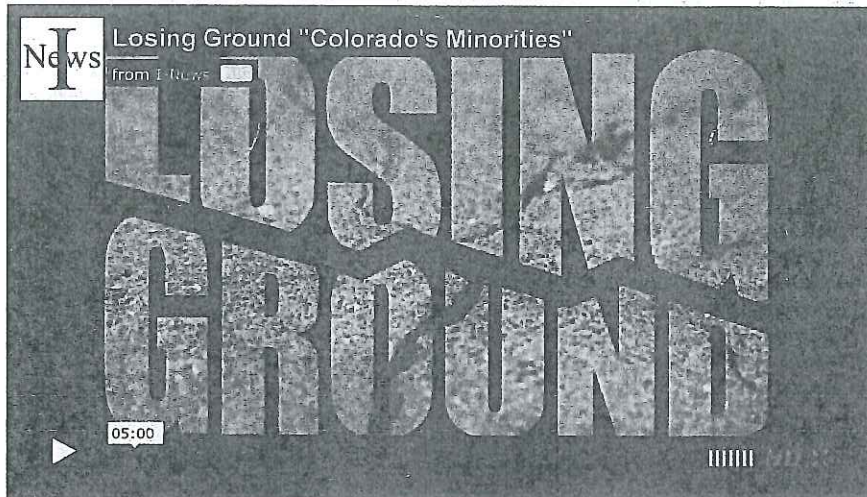
0

Tweet | 3

Like

Sign Up to see what your friends like.

*This article and other material were produced by I-News Network, whose journalists analyzed six decades of reports from the U.S. Census Bureau to track the state's poverty rates, family income, high school and college graduation rates and home ownership. The analysis uncovered surprising racial and ethnic disparities. Minority gains made during the era of the civil rights movement eroded with time. Colorado evolved from a state that was by most measures more equitable than the national average in the first decades covered by the analysis to one that is less so now. Story text begins below this video.*



By some of the most important measures of social progress, black and Latino residents of Colorado have lost ground compared to white residents in the decades since the civil rights movement.



Angel Castro's son, Aaron, 3, watches a movie after his evening bath while Castro feeds his sister, Alexis, 17 months, at their Englewood apartment. Castro, 28, a single mother relying heavily on public assistance, quit her part-time job after losing childcare for the two children. Single parenthood is a bigger indicator of poverty than race, according to data analyzed by I-News Network. (Joe Mahoney/The iNews Network)

Minority gains made during the 1960s and 1970s have eroded with time, an I-News Network analysis of six decades of demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau found. In other categories, the gaps between whites and minorities have steadily widened since 1960.

The analysis focused on family income, poverty rates, high school and college graduation and home ownership. Health data and justice records examined also revealed disparities.

Similar racial and ethnic inequities appear nationwide. But one glaring fact about Colorado is that it went from a state that was by most measures more equitable than the national average in the first decades covered by the analysis to one that is less so now.

According to most experts, racial and ethnic inequality will pose a significant future handicap for a state in which minorities are a rising population.

"I was actually shocked," said Eric Nelson, vice president of the Aurora NAACP, after examining the data analysis. "You would think we as a nation would have overcome a lot of things since then. It's like, 'Wow! We're spinning our wheels going in reverse.'"

#### In this article

- [Single parents](#)
- [Education gaps](#)
- [Poverty and education](#)
- [Gaps widen](#)
- Read the entire series at [I-News](#)

There are important caveats, of course, including the decades-long rise of professional classes among both blacks and Latinos and striking examples of individual wealth and achievement. Minorities have made gains in a number of categories, as well, but in most have not kept pace.

By the broad gauge of the Census measure, recent decades have not been kind to aspirations of equality by the state's minority residents. Almost 50 years after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his generation-defining "I have a dream" speech, income and education gaps have remained stubbornly high:

- In 1970, for example, black families earned 73 percent of white family incomes and Hispanic families earned 72 percent. By 2010, those numbers had fallen to about 60 percent and 50 percent, respectively.
- Almost 60 percent of Latino households were owner-occupied in 1970; now it's just beneath 50 percent. Most experts attribute an immigration influx with pulling down Latino numbers.
- The gaps among adults with college degrees have steadily widened since 1960, with the percent of whites with college degrees three times higher than the Latino rate and double the black rate. Those disparities are the nation's worst for both Latinos and blacks.

Among more positive trends, 86 percent of black adults had graduated from high school in 2010, up from 31 percent in 1960. Latinos have also improved high school graduation rates through the decades, but still lagged badly at 65 percent, compared to 95 percent for whites, in 2010.

For other minority groups in Colorado, their numbers were too small to statistically compare, particularly during the early decades of the analysis.

#### Critical gaps include education, other indicators

Poverty, income and education gaps in the state parallel other important disparities outlined in many studies that show blacks and Latinos lagging behind whites in one critical measure of health after another.

The U.S. Census Bureau only began tracking data about health insurance in recent years and does not collect other information about overall health. But data compiled by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment over the past 15 years shows that the state's ethnic minorities do not fare as well as white residents when it comes to disease and death.

Blacks and Latinos, for example, experience significantly higher rates of infant mortality and deaths from diseases such as diabetes than whites in Colorado.



Dr. Carolyn Chen, a physician at Clínica Family Health Services in Adams County, examines six-month-old Isaac Cabanas-Saucedo on Friday, Jan. 11, 2013. (Joe Mahoney/The iNews Network)

*Read into the Sen.  
Ed. Comm. record  
on Jan 24<sup>th</sup> (2013)  
George Walker  
1-24-2013*